THE SOCIAL PLANNING and RESEARCH COUNCIL of Hamilton and District

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FOLLOW-UP SURVEY REPORT

ON

OPERATION EMPLOYABILITY

STUDENTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 Background and Purpose 1

2.0 Methodology
- 2.1 Method of Contact 2
- 2.2 Questionnaire Design 2
- 2.3 Profile of Students 3

3.0 Results and Discussion
- 3.1 Evaluation of Placement 4
- 3.2 Job Search 6
- 3.3 Job Search Assistance 7
- 3.4 Work Experience After Operation Employability 8
- 3.5 Evaluation of the Work Experience 10
- 3.6 Pensions/Drug Plan Loss 13

4.0 Summary 15

5.0 Conclusions and Implications 17

6.0 Recommendations 19

Appendices 21

1.0 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to undertake a follow-up survey of participants in Operation Employability - a co-operative education program for secondary school students with disabilities.

Operation Employability was a special initiative, sponsored by the Hamilton-Wentworth Industry-Education Council within the three Boards of Education which operate in the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth. The program provided students with an opportunity to develop their employability through placements in work settings while enrolled in secondary school. Operation Employability was established as a pilot project in 1986 and was completed in 1989.

An evaluation of the program by the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton and District concluded that the program had been effective in enhancing employment-related skills among the student - the majority of which were developmentally disabled. Concerns were raised, however, about the extent to which these effects would actually increase the probability of obtaining non-sheltered employment, following graduation from secondary school.

The purpose of this study, therefore, was to follow-up the thirteen participating students who had graduated from school at least one year prior to the time of the study.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Method of Contact

Names and addresses of thirteen students and their parents, chosen for follow-up, were given to the Research interviewer at the Social Planning and Research Council (SPRC) by Ken Bennett of the Industry-Education Council.

A letter was sent from SPRC to twelve of the thirteen families to notify the parents that a follow-up survey was being done on students who had recently completed the OE program and that they would shortly be receiving a telephone call from an interviewer. One family could not be contacted by mail, phone or in person, so this student was not included in the survey.

Interviews for both parents and students were done by telephone with the exception of one student who was interviewed in person at a workshop because of his difficulty in speaking on the phone.

Number of Contacts:

12 parents - by telephone
9 students - by telephone
1 student - in person at a workshop

Two students could not be contacted by telephone or in person but were included in the survey indirectly as a result of interviews with their parents.

2.2 Questionnaire Design

One questionnaire format was designed for interviewing parents and three questionnaire formats were designed for interviewing students. There were separate questionnaires for:

1) students who were currently employed
2) students who were employed since leaving the program but were not currently employed
3) students who had not been employed since leaving the program.

The questionnaire format chosen for a student interview was dependent on the answer given by the parent in question 1 of the parent questionnaire. This question determined the employment status of the student.

Each questionnaire, for parents and for students, included both closed and open-ended questions allowing for parents and students to give comments on questions asked by the interviewer.

* See appendices for samples of questionnaires.

2.3 Profile of Students

As of June 1990, thirteen students from three school boards had completed the supported work experience of Operation Employability (OE). It was these thirteen students and their parents who were chosen for follow-up interviews to determine whether or not they were currently in the labour market at time of interview. Of the thirteen students, one group of five students completed the program in June 1989, while another group of eight students completed it in June 1990.

June 1989 group:
- 3 students were from the Hamilton-Wentworth Roman Catholic Separate School Board
- 2 students were from the Wentworth County School Board of Education

June 1990 group:
- 5 students from the Board of Education for the City of Hamilton (finished at age 21)*
- 3 students from the Wentworth County School Board of Education

* The five students from the Board of Education for the City of Hamilton had been in the OE program since 1987. It was required of these students who had entered the OE program at ages (16 - 17) to remain in the program until age 21 i.e., June 1990.

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Evaluation of OE Placement

Parents

Many of the comments by parents about the effects of the OE program on student personality and skill development were quite positive. Most parents felt that the OE program gave students effective training and experience in developing good work habits and coping skills. Students learned how to deal with new situations, how to get around in the community and how to cope in a regular work setting. Students learned to do more for themselves and gained some self-confidence and a greater awareness of their capabilities. Other parents felt it was important that their son or daughter were happy and well-liked by their employers and that students were praised for good work while in OE job placements. One parent felt that participation in OE took away the label or stigma of being mentally handicapped and made employers more aware of what mentally handicapped people are capable of doing given a chance.

At the same time, it was apparent that the OE program was not without its problems. Although students learned many important skills while on OE placement, they also encountered some serious difficulties. These difficulties seemed to occur while students were on work placement through the OE program and most likely could re-occur if students were to find regular employment.

Transportation

Travelling to and from work was a common concern of parents. A student's short attention span or changes in bus scheduling could cause a student to miss bus stops or get on the wrong bus. Some students could not read. This complicated their use of the transportation system. One parent resolved the problem by driving her daughter to and from work every day. There was concern about student safety while enroute to work. One mother told the interviewer that "some mentally ill ladies in her area were sexually abused" and she was afraid for her own daughter.

Job Placement

Almost all of the parents were pleased with student involvement in the OE placement program claiming the experience to be very beneficial to the students. However, one parent

did report some problems. She told the interviewer that her daughter got lost in the shuffle of staff changes and as a result she stayed at the same level throughout most of the placement and was not able to advance. The same mother felt that a supervisor had taken her daughter under her wing and "mothered" her to the point that the student was held back and unable to move on to new experiences. This caused the student to become bored with the placement.

Social Skills

The inability of students to make social contact with other employees while on placement was a problem. One parent told the interviewer that during coffee break "the mentally handicapped people sat alone in one corner while the staff socialized in the other corner". Another student was left to do her work alone and was ignored by staff. Another parent said their son was teased and ridiculed. "People did things behind his back."

Student Ability

Short attention spans, mental confusion, poor sense of time, lack of social skills, inability to read or to follow instructions were some of the problems pointed out by parents. One student was always late for work, and was unable to cope with any changes in time schedules. Others had to be constantly supervised, given very routine tasks and be told what to do. They could only handle minimal responsibility. These problems plus the requirements of the job caused a great deal of stress for some students. Looking for work and even beginning a new job is stressful enough for most people. But for the developmentally disabled person, who had to overcome unusual obstacles in their attempts to "work", the stress could be pronounced.

Students

Of the five students who were currently employed, the seven who were interviewed were asked if OE helped them to get their job. All seven answered "yes". When asked if the OE program made it easier for them to do their job - all seven answered "yes". Unlike their parents, the students interviewed gave few if any comments about OE or their job. The comments given were as follows:

"I go to school, learn to count money (at the workshop)."

"Job's okay - good people down there."

"Don't know - like everything."

The three students who were employed, but not now, were asked "Has your experience in OE helped in anyway?". All three answered "yes".

"I got to go to co-op. It helped me find where I fit."

"I got to know people. Can do the work."

"Good idea. Helped a lot of people."

3.2 Job Search

Role of Operation Employability

When asked by the interviewer whether their son's or daughter's experience in the OE program had any affect on their chances of finding employment:

4 parents said OE had no effect

8 parents said OE had increased chances of finding work

The job search was an issue of great frustration for almost all of the parents interviewed. Although most of the parents felt that OE was a worthwhile effort and did help the students considerably in preparation for the workplace, the program appeared to offer little or no support in the actual job search.

"The school made promises but nothing was done."

"When the program finished everyone dropped him."

"It was good, but where do we go from here?"

"It didn't do her any good. Same for most of them. Dead loss."

"Great gesture. It helped them a lot. But now he's out of school, he's left in the middle of nowhere and we're stuck."

Role of Employers

Many of the parents felt the problem was also with the employers.

"Employers don't want to be bothered."

"It was a community service thing for them (employers) but they would never hire."

"They hired college students, but they used her (OE student) as a volunteer."

"He has good work habits - but that doesn't make much difference to employers."

"Nobody gave him a chance. He ended up in Cumberland cleaning bus shelters."

Role of Economy/Recession

Some of the parents were aware, as with most people looking for work, that jobs were just not available at time of survey due to the recession.

"May be possibilities for work, but things aren't good now."

"There was a time when jobs were plentiful. Now? No jobs."

"They're (OE students) competing with university students, and they (university students) can't get job."

Role of OE Student

Some parents expressed doubts as to whether their son or daughter would ever be able to get into the real work world despite the OE training.

"The program helped. She learned from it. But would anybody hire her for employment?"

"She'll never get a regular job."

"He's not high enough functioning to get a minimum wage position."

Many of the parents tried on their own through various agencies (PATH, UIC, CDI Placement) to find work for their sons or daughters. This, too, was a frustrating endeavour, as expressed by one parent.

"I tried for at least two years all over the place. I went to UIC, many places but no help. Finally I gave up."

3.3 Job Search Assistance

When asked by the interviewer what additional help was needed to obtain employment, parents expressed the following suggestions.

"Help with transportation."

"Supervision - somebody to tell them what to do."

"People to be patient and willing to give needed help."

"To get into some kind of a program."

"Somebody to be a go between - to line up employers who might hire."

"Somebody to give them a chance."

The same question was asked of the three students who were employed but are not employed now. Two replied "none" - no help needed and the third, the volunteer, said the "guy at school" was helping him.

3.4 Work Experience After Operation Employability

Interviews about work experience since leaving the OE program showed that out of twelve students: 8 students were currently employed

3 students were employed but not now

1 student was never employed

* refer to Table 1 for breakdown

Presently Employed

Of those eight students who were presently employed, seven of them were involved in a workshop setting (Cumberland or Westfield). They carried out such duties as cleaning bus shelters, cutting grass, packaging soap and shower caps or cutting vegetables in a kitchen. Some of their duties were carried out within the workshops e.g., packaging, or out in the community e.g. bus shelters or kitchen work.

Only one of the eight students was currently employed in the regular labour market. This student worked at a Pizzeria and his duties were setting up chairs on the patio, washing tables and floors and spraying flowers. This employment was obtained through Futures.

Length of Employment

Of those currently at the workshops, two entered the workshops in July 1990, one in August 1990 and four in September 1990. The student who worked at the pizzeria began work there in June 1991.

Was Employed But Not Now

Of those three students who were employed but were now out of work, two were at the Cumberland Workshop. One student cleaned bus shelters and the other made sandwiches in the cafeteria of the Sheraton Hotel (a Cumberland workshop placement). The third student, who was physically disabled (arthritis) was able to work for awhile at the M.A. Toy Factory and at an office. At the toy factory, she was required to lift heavy objects and to operate a drill press. She was later employed as an office clerk at her sister's office doing typing, filing, photocopying and some computer work.

TABLE 1: JOB DUTIES BROKEN DOWN BY CATEGORY

Duties Done at Workshops or Outside Employment

Maintenance	Factory	Office	Kitchen
clean bus shelters	package	type	wash tables
wash floors	- shower caps	file	cut vegetables
wash windows/walls	- soap	photocopy	make sandwiches
cut grass	drill press	(done by	
take out garbage	(not at workshop)	physically	
		disabled	
		student)	

Duties Desired by Students

Maintenance	Factory	Office	Kitchen	Other
cut lawns			wash dishes	work with pets
carpentry			restaurant work	work with
cleaning			kitchen work	children
do maintenance				babysit
outdoor work				

Length of Employment

Of the two students who worked at or through the workshops, one worked for approximately six weeks at Sheraton Hotel, the other for 2 - 3 months cleaning bus shelters. The physically disabled student worked at her sister's office for the summer - July and August 1990.

Reasons for Leaving Employment

Of the two who worked at the workshop - the parents took them out of the workshops claiming dissatisfaction with the level of work duties and small pay allowances. Both sets of parents felt that their son or daughter "could do better". (One of the students at the time of interview, was volunteering at the school board doing cleaning work and the interviewer was told there is a strong possibility he may be hired as part-time staff, 2 - 3 days a week in September).

The physically disabled third student left the toy factory after a car accident which compounded her disability. Her office employment was a temporary fill-in for maternity leave.

Job Search (within last 2 months)

Of the four students who were not currently working i.e., they have never worked or have worked but are not working now: none of them had been looking for work within the past two months; although as already mentioned, one student's volunteer work may have become paid part-time employment.

3.5 Evaluation of the Work Experience

Out of the twelve students who completed the OE program:

7 are currently involved in a workshop

2 were in a workshop but were unemployed at the time of the survey

2 have found work outside of the workshop setting

1 had not found work

Currently in Workshops

Some of the parents interviewed were not happy with the current situation. They

complained that the tasks done at workshops (cleaning bus shelters, kitchen work, cutting grass) were unstimulating and did not match the potential or the abilities of some of the students. One parent, whose son is at a workshop, told the interviewer - "He's disappointed. Not much there for them. We'd like to do more than clean bus shelters. He's capable of more but can't get a real job. He wants more stimulation."

Another student worked at a day care centre while in the OE program and discovered she was very good with children. The day care centre could not hire her and at the time of the interview she was presently at a workshop cutting grass and doing kitchen work. She was bored. She still wanted to work with children, but she had not been able to receive help in finding the kind of work she wanted.

Two of the parents interviewed took their sons or daughters out of the workshop after a few months and one of those students began volunteering at a job that may have worked into paid part-time employment.

The students who were currently employed in workshops were interviewed and asked how they like their job, what did they like about it, what did they not like about it, and what they would like to do if they could find another job. Of the seven students, only six were interviewed since one could not be contacted. They were not quite as verbal as their parents. When asked if they enjoyed their work, all of them indicated they did (yes, fine, okay, don't mind). One student said "it's alright but I want another job".

When asked what they liked about their jobs, one said it was fun, two answered "everything" and the other three students named specific tasks they enjoyed: "doing the soap - putting it in a pink box", "cutting under trees and between houses", "when the windows (bus shelters) are not too dirty".

When asked what they did not like about their work, three students answered "nothing", one said "okay" and two named specific tasks they didn't like: "when the box leaks", "when the garbage cans are rusty".

When asked if they would like to find another job, three answered "yes". The other three students answered "sure", "maybe", "don't mind".

When asked what kind of job they would like to have: three answered "not sure" and one said "don't know". Of the other three students, one wanted to do maintenance work, one was interested in music and the other wanted to work with pets and take care of their health. These were former OE students who were presently packaging soaps, doing kitchen work and cleaning bus shelters in a workshop setting.

No Longer in Workshop

The two students whose parents took them out of the workshop were also interviewed. One student worked at a hotel kitchen making sandwiches and cutting vegetables. When interviewed she claimed she enjoyed the work, thought it was fun and there was nothing she didn't like about it. When asked if she would like another job, she answered "yes" that she would like to "work in a kitchen - getting things ready".

The other student was cleaning bus shelters and he answered that it was "okay" and he "didn't know" of anything he disliked about the job. When asked if he wanted another job, he answered "think so" and told the interviewer he wanted to work "at the school" (where he was volunteering and doing cleaning duties).

Currently Employed - Not in Workshop

Only two students were able to find regular employment. One student was still working at a Pizzeria, setting up chairs, washing tables and floors and spraying flowers. Although he said he enjoyed the work and there was "nothing" he didn't like about it, he did express a desire for another job where he could "wash dishes".

The other student had to leave her employment because of various physical difficulties, but she had held down two jobs since leaving OE. Her first job at the toy factory was too hard for her because of heavy lifting, but she liked the "money". Her second job at the office, typing, filing and photocopying, was also "okay". It gave her the opportunity to move out of her parents' home and to "be on my own". However, the hours were too long and this affected her health. She told the interviewer she would like another job, but only part-time for a few hours a week. She felt that babysitting would be better because she could stay in the house and "work around being sore" (arthritis).

3.6 Pensions/Drug Plan Loss

A major concern of persons on disability pensions relates to whether or not benefits will continue while employed. Loss of pension and/or drug benefits could create extreme financial problems for people employed part-time in a minimum wage job. The parents of OE students were asked if loss of pension and/or drug benefits was a major concern to them. Half of the twelve parents interviewed answered it was of no concern and half answered that it was a concern.

It is a concern because:

"He's on medication for life. It costs a lot."

"If he lost the job, there's a long waiting period to get back on pension."

"He's better off as he is now than to work for $200 and not get any drug benefits."

It appeared that the loss of pension and drug benefits combined with a minimum wage employment was the biggest worry for most of the concerned parents. On a minimum wage job, drugs would not be affordable and therefore would be unavailable to those who need them.

It is not a concern:

"Wages at the workshop fit in with the pension."

"She doesn't have a job, but it would be a concern if she got a job at minimum wage."

"I don't care about the pension as long as he gets in the community with normal people."

"He's not looking for work."

Parents were also asked if this concern affected the student's chances of obtaining employment. The question was redundant since most of the OE students were in workshops and other factors created a greater hindrance to their obtaining work (already discussed) than whether or not they received benefits.

The three students who were employed but not now were also asked about the drug benefits. Two of them were not worried about losing their pension or drugs, but one was, and answered "yes".

Not concerned:

"No. I worked for a while on disability pension. They just take off what I earned."

"No. I'd try to find an employer who gives drug coverage. Otherwise I'd be up

the creek."

Drugs Paid by Employer

The students (currently employed) were also asked if their employer paid for their drugs. Many of them didn't know or didn't seem to understand the question. Since most of the students were "employed" in the workshops (Cumberland and Westfield), the question was again redundant because these students were still receiving benefits from the government.

When the one student who was currently employed at a regular job was asked these questions, he didn't know if his employer paid for his drugs or how much he earned.

The three students who were employed but were not working now were not asked this question.

4.0 SUMMARY

The Operation Employability Experience

On the whole OE appears to have achieved its objectives in providing students with experience in the workplace. As a result of the experience, many students learned to do more for themselves and to function more effectively in the community. Self confidence increased and students gained a more positive outlook on their life in the community.

However, OE was not without problems. Major areas of concern expressed by parents were, the use of public transportation, lack of social skills on the job and supervision on work placement.

Job Search (after OE)

The fact that only two out of the twelve students interviewed were able to find "work" after completing the program, is an issue for serious consideration. Many parents felt that OE had failed them in not providing follow-up job search and support. Parents were "on their own" in their efforts to find work for the student. Employers who appeared happy to have students on OE placement, did not hire them after the project was finished. The current recession also compounded the problem.

Work Experience after Operation Employability

Although the purpose of OE was to train its students for possible employment in the labour market, the results of the follow-up survey on twelve students who graduated in 1990 indicated that almost all of the currently employed graduates are in a workshop setting (i.e., Cumberland or Westfield):

7 students employed in a workshop

1 student employed at a Pizzeria

Of the four students who are not working now, three of them did work for a while and one never worked:

2 students employed in a workshop for a short time

1 student worked in a factory and office for a short time

1 student never worked

The survey shows that nine out of twelve students spent some time in a workshop after OE and only two students out of twelve were able to find employment in the regular labour market. It appears that most of the students have opted for sheltered workshops as an alternative to staying home and doing nothing.

Work Duties

On the whole students who worked in the workshops were carrying out simple tasks - cleaning bus shelters, cutting grass, preparing vegetables. For some students, this type of work appears satisfactory. For others, the work was boring, they wanted to do more, and the work did not match the perceived capabilities of the student.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Conclusions

The results of this follow-up suggest that Operation Employability was successful in providing "work experience" through the job placement. This experience, however, appeared to have a minimal effect upon the students employability within the non-sheltered labour market, following completion of secondary school.

A lack of follow-up and job search assistance was most frequently cited as a problem by the parents.

Operation Employability was designed to affect one factor which was judged to diminish the employability of developmentally and physically disabled students - a lack of work experience. The results of this follow-up suggest that the alleviation of this factor, alone, does not substantially increase the employability of the project participant.

Other factors such as job search assistance, employability counselling and employer attitudes clearly need to be addressed, in addition to the issue of work experience.

Implications for Future Development

Program Development

In terms of program development, there is a need for greater direct liaison between the program, clients/parents, and prospective employers. A preliminary training session may be an appropriate vehicle for establishing these lines of communication.

Also, within the program, there is a need to develop better (i.e., more appropriate and adequate) linkage of tasks performed and learning experiences gained while in a placement with "real" paying jobs in the general labour force. This has implications for job search training and/or coaching, particularly as the client's tenure in the program is coming to closure.

Matching the client's abilities or aptitudes to an employer who may be willing to hire on at the conclusion of the program is an optional program result. In another light, providing

the client with a program placement which enhances the transferability of their skills in a variety of work settings later on would seem to be indicative of program success.

Post-Program Follow-up

Evaluating the effectiveness of Operation Employability will require ongoing post-program assessment. In order to discount other factors which may contribute or detract from a client's post-program employability and employed status, it is important to continue efforts which demonstrate that the program is the real determinant of job acquisition.

Additionally, the research conducted to this point has focused only on acquisition, not job retention. Thus, there are implications for further assessment to be done which examines the relationship between getting a job and keeping it for a meaningful period of time.

In terms of employer cooperation and placement development, there is a need to promote greater feedback from employers regarding their perceptions of both the clients and program. Greater input from prospective employers may assist program planners to understand the complexities of job placements, while also tying these employers into a developmental process. Perhaps pre-placement planning can be done in a collaborative manner which ensures a more creative and integrated client placement.

Program Impacts on the Community

The community-based impacts of Operation Employability are best described in terms of awareness and changed attitudes towards (mentally disabled) workers. Thus, there are implications for this program to better promote itself as an educational vehicle to employers. That is, it is a program which uses a practical and realistic approach to job creation which is mutually of benefit to employee and employer. Creating a greater awareness of this program can only serve to strengthen its ties with the community of employers in Hamilton-Wentworth.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Student

1. Assessment of each student on completion of work placement:
   physical psychological emotional skills

2. Counselling of Students and Parents*: (in-resident counsellor of OE)
   - while in OE placement
   - for several months after OE (follow-up)
   - psychological, emotional, behaviourial
   - social skills
   - physical skills e.g., task related
   - job search skills/volunteer placement
   - coping strategies
   - practice skills - e.g., using bus (so they don't forget)

   also:
   - support groups for parents
   - workshops/conferences
   - newsletters to parents (job related information)

* Better to have in-staff counsellor (would know the program and student) than to refer students to public counselling agencies.

3. Volunteer Work Placement as Alternative to Workshop

4. Alternative to all day/5 day week sheltered workshop:
   - half day school/half day workshop
   - half week school/work/volunteer and half week workshop

Program

1. Make a study of labour market to determine what mentally handicapped people can do as alternative to cleaning, packaging and kitchen work in workshops e.g., stuff envelopes and collate in an office.

2. Study to determine what agencies in Hamilton work with mentally handicapped and what specific programs they offer: e.g., PATH, UIC.

3. Public Awareness/Education of Employers*
   - Newsletters to parents of - available services
     - employers willing to hire mentally handicapped
   - Newsletter to employers - to show what mentally handicapped can do
   - Interviewers with employers - dispel myths of mentally handicapped
   - Workshops for employers - what to expect from mentally handicapped
   - Liaison with agencies - e.g., PATH, UIC to share information
   - Declare mentally disabled day/week - hiring campaign

   * Reason for Public Awareness Campaign
     - Public and employers need to be more aware of mentally handicapped
     - more information sharing between agencies

4. Provide and maintain a list of employers willing to hire mentally handicapped that parents can consult

APPENDICES

13 parents and students were listed to be interviewed

12 parents were interviewed by telephone (1 parent could not be reached)

9 students were interviewed by telephone

1 student was interviewed in person at Westfield

3 students could not be contacted

Of the 12 students whose parents were interviewed

- 8 are currently employed
- 3 were employed but not now
- 1 was never employed

Of the 8 students who are currently employed

- 3 are at Westfield
- 4 are at Cumberland
- 1 works at Pizzeria

Of the 3 students who were employed but not now

- 1 was at Cumberland
- 1 was at Sheraton Hotel (through Cumberland)
- 1 was at M.A. Toy Factory and her sister's office

Positive Experience with OE (Q3 - Parent)

- helped him to cope, helped him find his capability
- good experience (she did office work at school - prepared her for office job she did later)
- able to be with lots of people - cope with people
- everyone was happy with him
- learned a lot, can do more things
- she had excellent reports
- gave her experience, good training
- experience and exposure to work

- opened up awareness of mentally handicapped
- dispelled myths, no longer has a label
- give him a good outlook in getting out in community
- helped him see what other positions are like
- money well invested
- helped him to get around city using buses
- did well at placement
- gave him good work habits for a "real job"

Affect of OE (Q III)

No effect	4
Increased Chances	8
Decreased Chances	0
Don't Know	0

Types of Job Duties Listed for those who worked or are working (Q1)

work on patio	clean bus shelters	package Downy
wash floors	package shower caps	wrap soap
spray flowers	count shower caps	make wagons
wash tables	work on drill press	filing
garden	cut vegetables	photocopying
wash windows/walls	kitchen work	office work
cutting grass	made sandwiches	take out garbage

Types of Job Desired if Employment can be found

work with pets	kitchen work
wash dishes	outdoor work
carpentry & cleaning	restaurant work
work with children	cut lawns
do maintenance	babysitting

Problems Encountered on the Job/Placement and on Operation Employability (Parents - Q5)

- was left too much by herself - alone a lot
- had a grand mal seizure a job, never before, stress
- people make fun of her/him, tease, do things behind back
- parent afraid for daughter to and from work (other mentally ill ladies in area were sexually abused)
- treated like 2nd class citizen
- supervisor took her under wing and mothered her too much, held her back from new experiences, she got bored
- lost in the shuffle of staff changes, disappointed
- bored with cutting lawns etc., wants more
- can't read, can't follow instructions, can't be on time, slow
- socializing difficult - left by himself at coffee breaks, staff ignored him
- not working to potential, bored, little stimulation

After OE looking for "real job" (Parents comments)

- may be possibilities for work but things aren't good right now
- went after a lot of jobs but couldn't get any
- enrolled in CDI Placement but they couldn't get her a job
- when program finished, everyone "dropped" him
- nobody gave him a chance - ended up in Cumberland cleaning bus shelters
- tried for 2 years all over the place, school made promises, nothing done. UIC didn't help. I gave up - now he volunteers.
- will people hire her? Could she get a decent job?
- it didn't do any good, dead loss, employers don't want to be bothered
- OE is good but where do you go from here?
- Employers are willing to try. It was a community service thing for them. But they would never hire.
- she wants to work with children but Little People Nursery wouldn't hire here, they hire students (college) but they could use her as a volunteer. Now she's cutting lawns.
- Westfield doesn't have funds or staff to follow-up, they couldn't help her to find a job with children
- there was a time when jobs were plentiful, now no jobs. Competing with university students and they can't get jobs.

- need to get them out of sheltered workshops but they have no where else to go
- he has good work habits for a real job but it doesn't make much difference to employers
- they (OE) couldn't place him in the program he wanted

Problems Students May Bring into a Job

[not a question on questionnaire but worthy of consideration]

- gets confused about time and schedules. Must always keep the same time for breaks, etc., always late, poor sense of time
- short attention span - mind wanders, might miss bus stop, needs constant supervision. Can't be around machinery
- she gets sick and is sore a lot (arthritis), can only work part-time
- slow of speech, can't handle responsibility, needs routine job
- poor speech, seizures under stress
- vulnerable to sexual assault enroute to work
- she can't read, what she learns to read, she forgets
- not high enough functioning to get even a minimum wage position
- slow, lazy, lacks social skills

Help or Assistance Needed to Find a Job or to Keep a Job (QIV)

- transportation - his mind wanders and he could miss the bus stop
- needs constant supervision, can't be around machinery
- needs routine work with someone to show him what to do. Can't handle responsibility
- needs somebody to give him a chance
- to get into some kind of a program
- leave her alone for now, she will have a job counsellor at Westfield
- transportation - she can't read bus signs and I'm concerned for her safety. She is registered for DARTS and I drive her
- people need to be patient with him and willing to give him the help he needs
- depends on the job, somebody needs to show him what to do
- on the job training and supervision for a while
- need help in social skills
- somebody to be a go between, to line up employers who might hire him
- needs more stimulation
- needs to be shown where and when to get on the bus

- at work he needs to be given specified times for breaks, etc. (when times vary he gets confused)

Concern about Loss of Pension and Drugs (Parents - QIIa)

Yes - would be a problem on his own. Can't read or write and would need help with banking. When he worked he lived with us (parents).

Yes - on medication for rest of life and it costs a lot. My husband just on a pension.

No - Her drugs are paid for and part of the rent.

Yes - If he gets job and loses benefits at minimum wage. If so he's better off as he is now than to work for $200 and not get drug benefits.

Yes - would they hire him?

No - she doesn't have a job. It would be a concern if she got a job especially at minimum wage

Yes - depends on how much she's making. If she lost the job there's a long waiting period to get back on pension. She's on medication.

No - no problem yet (student works at Pizzeria)

No - their wages (at Cumberland) fit in with pension

No - he gets only a small wage (Cumberland)

No - I doubt he would get any work that would affect the pension. He has Downs Syndrome.

Yes - most jobs are low pay. I'd rather see him in a real job - self supporting. If he lost job he'd go back on disability.

Issues Affected - Chances of Obtaining Employment (Parents - QIII)

Yes - would depend on how much they would cut back his pension. Where he is now, he wouldn't make enough to cut benefits. He gets $100 and a bus pass.

No - don't care about pension as long as he gets in the community with normal people.

Don't know - not looking for work now

Yes - have to consider. If job is minimum wage. She could lose benefits. So long as my husband is working - no problem

No - If he got full-time job - wouldn't need the pension

No - nothing available

No - He'd like to work in a restaurant

No - He's at the workshop

TO THE PARENT

BACKGROUND

Hello, I am calling from the Social Planning and Research Council. We had mailed to you a letter stating we will calling you for a short telephone interview. Have you received the letter?

There are two reasons we are carrying out this survey.

1) To find out what has happened to students who were involved with the Operation Employability Program while they were still in school, and

2) To gather some information about the employment problems of disabled young persons for a group of agencies and organizations which are trying to do something about these problems through the Industry Education Council.

Do you mind if I ask you a few questions about your son/daughter's employment situation since leaving the Operation Employability program?

PARENT SURVEY

Student's Name: _____

I. In which of the following 3 situations has _____ been in since he/she left school?

1) Has not been employed [ ]
2) Is currently employed [ ]
3) Has been employed, but is not employed now [ ]

If 2 or 3 above, could you please tell me:

Company	Job	Start Date	End Date	Reason for Leaving

II. There is some concern that disabled young persons may be reluctant to enter employment because they may need to give up their disability pension and other benefits such as paid prescription drugs.

1) Is this a concern of yours?

Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't Know [ ]

Comments: _____

_____

2) Has this issue affected _____ chances of obtaining employment?

Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't Know [ ]

Comments: _____

_____

III. Do you believe that _____ experience in the Operation Employability Program had any effect on his/her chances of obtaining employment?

No effect	[ ]
Increased chances	[ ]
Decreased chances	[ ]
Don't know	[ ]

Comments: _____

_____

_____

IV. What kinds of assistance does _____ now need to obtain or maintain employment?

_____

_____

_____

_____

V. Do you have any other comments you wish to make about either the Operation Employability Program or _____ current experiences with respect to employment?

_____

_____

_____

_____

INTRODUCTION TO STUDENTS

Hello, I am calling from the Social Planning and Research Council.

While you were still in school, you were involved in a program called Operation Employability and you spent some time working outside of the school. Do you remember that program?

While you were still in that program, we spoke to you about what you liked and didn't like about it. This helped your teachers and coaches to make the program better.

Now we are calling all of the students who have left school to find out what has happened to them during the past year or two.

Do you mind if I ask you a few questions?

STUDENT SURVEY

HAS NOT BEEN EMPLOYED .

Student's Name: _____

1) **Have you been trying to find a job since you left school?**

_____

2) **What have you done to try and find a job?** _____

_____

_____

3) **Would you like to find a job?** _____

If yes:

a) **What kind of job would you like to have?** _____

_____

b) **Why would you like to have a job?** _____

_____

c) **Is there anything you would not like about having a job?**

_____

If no:

a) **Why don't you want to have a job?** _____

_____

4) Do you worry about losing your disability pension if you had a job?

_____

5) Do you worry about losing your coverage for prescription drugs if you had a job?

_____

6) What kind of assistance do you need to help you get a job?

_____

_____

7) Do you think that your experience in Operation Employability helped you in any way?

_____

_____

8) In what way did it help you? _____

_____

_____

9) Do you have any comments you would like to make about Operation Employability?

_____

_____

_____

_____

STUDENT SURVEY

HAS BEEN EMPLOYED BUT NOT NOW

Student's Name: _____

1. I understand that you had a job:

   (a) with _____

   Is that right? Yes [ ] No [ ]

   (b) and also with _____

   Is that right? Yes [ ] No [ ]

2. What kind of work were you doing?

   Job 1 _____

   Job 2 _____

3. Did you enjoy the work?

   Job 1 _____

   Job 2 _____

4. What did you like about it?

   Job 1 _____

   _____

   Job 2 _____

   _____

5. What did you not like about it?

Job 1 _____

_____

Job 2 _____

_____

6. Why did you leave the job?

Job 1 _____

_____

Job 2 _____

_____

7. Would you like to have another job? _____

If yes, (a) What kind of job would you like to have?

_____

(b) What kind of help could you use to help you get a job?

_____

If no, (a) Why don't you want a job? _____

_____

8. Have you been looking for a job during the past two months?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If yes,

What have you been doing to try and find a job? _____

_____

9. Do you worry about losing your disability pension of you had a job?

_____

10. Do you worry about losing your coverage for prescription drugs if you had a job?

_____

11. Do you think that your experience in Operation Employability helped you in any way?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If yes, in what ways do you think it helped you? _____

_____

12. Do you have any comments you would like to make about Operation Employability?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____